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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 049959

LIMDIS TOECO 3

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, INFO LONDON, LISBON, MARCH 18, FROM ALGIERS REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0658

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENGR AG
SUBJECT: EXIM- SONATRACH NEGOTIATIONS

LONDON FOR UNDERSECRETARY CASEY

LISBON FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM

1. ON RETURNING FROM LONDON EVENING MARCH 17 I PHONED PRESIDENTIAL CONFIDENT ZEGHAR AND GAVE HIM BRIEF REPORT ON MY CONSULTATIONS WITH NEWSOM. HE SAID HE WOULD INFORM BOUMEDIENE (WHO SPENT WEEKEND WITH HIM) AND TAKE SOUNDINGS.

2. SPENT HOUR WITH ZEGHAR MORNING MARCH 18. HE SAID THAT SINCE EXIM- SONATRACH NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN RAISED TO GOVERNMENT LEVEL IN WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE HAD PERSONALLY TAKEN CHARGE IN ALGIERS. HE HAD RECEIVED GHOZALI IMMEDIATELY WHEN HE ARRIVED MARCH 17. GHOZALI REPORTED THAT AGREEMENT
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IN PRINCIPLE HAD BEEN REACHED AND NEGOTIATIONS WERE PROCEEDING WELL. GHOZALI RETURNED TO U. S. MARCH 19.

3. BOUMEDIENE WAS PLEASED WITH REPORT AND TOLD GHOZALI TO INSTRUCT BOUSSELHAM TO INVITE NEWSOM TO VISIT ALGIERS. GHOZALI WAS ASKED HIMSELF TO INVITE EXIM PRESIDENT KEARNS TO VISIT ALGERIA. ZEGHAR OBSERVED THAT THIS WAS AN UNUSUAL GESTURE BY BOUMEDIENE TO SHOW APPRECIATION TO USG FOR SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF EL PASO PROJECT AND TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR NEWSOM TO REVIEW WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS WITH TOP ALGERIAN OFFICIALS. BOUMEDIENE ALSO WANTED TO INVITE KEARNS (FOR VISIT AT A SEPARATE TIME) IN APPRECIATION OF EXIM' S POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD ALGERIA.

4. I SUGGESTED THAT NEWSOM MIGHT COME AT EARLY DATE AFTER APRIL 4. ZEGHAR THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE GOOD TIMING AS IT WOULD ALLOW CONCLUSION OF EL PASO ACCORDS. (WE WILL CHECK FOREIGN VISITORS AND RECOMMEND BEST DATE.)

5. I TOLD ZEGHAR THAT WE FELT THAT NEWSOM' S VISIT HERE SHOULD PRODUCE SOMETHING POSITIVE IN ADDITION TO REVIEW OF CURRENT MATTERS. HE REPLIED THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT BOUMEDIENE WOULD NOT HAVE INVITED NEWSOM UNLESS HE WAS PREPARED TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HOWEVER, MY FURTHER PROBING DID NOT ELICIT A FIRM STATEMENT RE RELATIONS. THIS LEFT IMPRESSION THAT ZEGHAR WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS BOUMEDIENE ON SUBJECT, WITH RENEWED EFFORT WHEN EL PASO ACCORDS ARE FINAL.

6. I RECOMMEND THAT NEWSOM ACCEPT BOUMEDIENE' S INVITATION, INDICATING TO BOUSSELHAM THAT WE CONSIDER THIS GOOD TIME TO REVIEW ALL MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AT HIGHEST LEVEL GOA. I WOULD MEANWHILE KEEP UP PRESSURE ON ZEGHAR RE RELATIONS, BUT NOT MENTION SUBJECT EITHER TO HAMDANI OR FOREIGN MINISTRY CONTACTS WHO, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY AGAINST RELATIONS, MIGHT AUTOMATICALLY DEVELOP STALLING TACTICS. EAGLETON UNQUOTE. ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** LIMDIS
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